



Ministry
of Defence

[REDACTED]
DE&S Secretariat

Defence Equipment & Support

[REDACTED]
MOD Abbey Wood
Bristol BS34 8JH



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our Reference:
FOI2015/03576

Your Reference:
MOD 2/14

Date: 26 November
2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Further to my previous letters, I am writing to provide a response to your Freedom of Information request, in which you asked for the following information:

Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Annual Review of Safety meeting 2014 - with safety regulators, ONR, HSE's Hazardous Installations Directorate, and the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator.

Please would you supply full minutes to this meeting ('Environment, Safety, Health and Quality Function, Annual Review on Safety to the Regulatory Community (CY14)') including any background and support papers referenced at the meeting.

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds some of the information you request and I apologise for the time taken to review the information in scope. Please find enclosed the AWE Environment, Safety, and Health Annual Review of Safety 2014 accordingly.

The MOD does not hold any information in scope of the part of your request concerning 'any background and support papers referenced at the meeting'. Although you will see that page 5 of the Review states that 'The Annual Review of Safety broadly followed the process laid down within CQM300 - Management Review...', I can confirm that this is a generic quality manual which does not specifically support the Annual Review of Safety. Page 6 of the attached document quotes a request that 'in future the Annual Safety Data be issued further in advance...'. I can confirm that this refers to the data contained in the slide pack which forms part of the information released under this request.

I must inform you that some of the information is exempt from disclosure under the Act and this has been withheld by way of redacting the document. Some information has been withheld under the absolute exemption at Section 40 (Personal Information). Some

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information has been withheld under Section 24(1) (National Security), Section 26(1) (Defence) and Section 43(2) (Commercial Interests) which are qualified exemptions. We have therefore conducted a public interest test to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining each exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The document contains detailed references to AWE's operations, including programmes, production processes and identification of specialist facilities. It is recognised that the UK's nuclear weapon activities are a matter of significant public interest and that the document demonstrates the commitment to maintaining safe operation of the AWE sites. There is, however, a stronger public interest in maintaining the safety and security of the population by not disclosing certain information that could be used by hostile parties, including terrorists. This would be likely to harm national security, undermining UK defence capability and the Armed Forces.

The document also contains references that could prejudice the commercial interests of both the MOD and AWE. It is recognised that there is a presumption of openness within the FOI Act and that transparency in these matters helps to demonstrate the way in which MOD's contractors are held to account. It is considered that the greater public interest however, lies in maintaining MOD's commercial negotiating position and, thus, its ability to derive the best performance from its contractors and value for money for the taxpayer.

You will recall that in our previous letters we informed you that some information was potentially subject to qualified exemption Section 27 (International Relations). Following further consideration of the information in scope of your request, we have concluded that no information need be withheld under Section 27.

If you are not satisfied with this response or wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance Team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB [REDACTED]. Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Defence Equipment & Support Policy Secretariat